

## **Lucky! His Life Was Spared- The War Experiences of Myrten Francis Grant**

Myrten Francis Grant was born on November 21, 1924 and was the oldest son of Francis Bromley Grant and Myrtle Powell Grant. He grew up in Lehi, Utah, graduating from Lehi High School in 1943.

He was immediately drafted into the United States Army at the age of eighteen. He was inducted in the army at Fort Douglas where he stayed for only a short time. He said they dressed him and fed him and got him ready to go to the infantry school. The short time he was there, he remembered that there were a lot of farm boys that the army made clean under their fingernails. He also remembered that there were a lot of returned Latter-day Saint missionaries who felt it was their responsibility to turn all the new recruits into good Latter-day Saints. They had family prayer with the group and some of them didn't even know what a family prayer was.

From Fort Douglas, Myrten was transferred to infantry training at Camp Roberts in California. He said that it was extremely dry. There were a few barracks here and there and a parade ground. There was a large number of Spanish American recruits would sing loud songs all night long. He said that it was like **hell** listening to them when he wanted to go to sleep.

After he finished training at Camp Roberts, he went to Fort Benning in Georgia which seemed to him like he had been transferred to **Heaven** because they got to eat pork chops and ice cream. Lucky! His life was spared.

Myrten left for Europe with the largest convoy to cross the Atlantic Ocean during the war from Newport News. He was sent to Italy in the 91st infantry and ended up on the front lines.

One time his group ended up behind the German lines. He spent a lot of time in the Po River Valley in the winter and said that was the coldest he had ever been. He received a Presidential Citation for the Po River Valley Push. He achieved the rank of Corporal.

During the first battle he was in, he said he thought it was beautiful. The tracers were lighting the night sky. To better enjoy it he stood up making himself a perfect target for the enemy. The guy next to him pulled him down to the ground calling him a few choice words. Lucky! He was spared.

Another time he almost got killed, but didn't when the group he was with were all asleep. The Germans fired at them and took the top of the tent Myrten was sleeping in completely off. He woke up looking up at the star-studded sky. Lucky! He was spared.

All of the soldiers he was with called him "Curley" or "Junior" because he was by far the youngest of the group. He told of receiving packages with cigarettes and other things they needed in. He would trade his cigarettes to the other guys for their gum. Then he would go into the nearest town and give the gum to the little Italian children.

Myrten often said that he wasn't sure if he ever took anyone's life, but he did save two of his comrades from death. The soldiers used to dig a hole, put gas in it, light it and place their helmet filled with water in them over the fire so they could shave. One time his friend discovered he didn't have enough heat, so he attempted to pour more gas on the flame. Unfortunately the flame jumped back at him and set him on fire. Myrten quickly grabbed a sleeping bag that was close and enveloped his friend, putting the fire out. The only bad thing was it was the captain's sleeping bag which had a large hole burned in it. His captain was not happy. But-Lucky! Their lives (because of Myrt's fast action) were spared.

The second occasion Myrten saved someone's life was when the soldiers were swimming in a body of water. One guy couldn't swim and didn't realize how

deep it was. He began screaming for help and going under. Myrten, being an excellent swimmer dove beneath the man and brought him to safety. Lucky! Their lives (again because of Myrt's action in the time of crisis) were spared.

Toward the end of the war the Germans were on the run. One time they left everything and took off. When the group Myrten was in came across the German's previously owned things, the GI's decided to take advantage of the booty. It looked like such a rag-tag group that General Mark Clark sent an order to them. He said that anyone who was found in possession of any German items would be court marshalled.

While in Italy, Myrten contracted hepatitis and had to go to the base hospital. This was the only time throughout his life he was in the hospital until just before he passed away. Yes Lucky! His life was spared.

Sometime before he was admitted he had taken an IQ test. The results came back and his commanding officer came to Myrten and said, "I didn't know you were such an intelligent young man, but you have the opportunity to go to the University of Florence. Myrt happily looked forward to that experience, but before he got the opportunity to do that, the war ended.

His outfit was shipped to Naples to go to the South Pacific. While he was on the train taking him to the ship, a soldier rushed by with the news that the United States had dropped two gigantic bombs on Japan and they had surrendered. Myrten didn't believe it at first, but when they got to the seaport, they were some of the first to return home. He was honorably discharged November 21, 1946, on his 21st birthday. Lucky! His life was spared.

Upon returning home, Myrten entered college at Brigham Young University where he learned of the College of Pharmacy, a new school at the University of Utah. He entered at that time and graduated in June of 1950. He served as a licensed pharmacist for 30 years. He served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as the first pharmacist in the Humanitarian Service of the

church and three years as the ward mission leader with his wife. He served in many offices of the church throughout his life and had many choice spiritual experiences. He was in the bishopric, Elders and Seventies President, Stake Sunday School councilor, teacher and home teacher.

He was an honorable righteous man. He married Vervene Sorenson in the Salt Lake LDS temple on June 15, 1949 and became father to three children, Brenda Joy, Winnifred Ann, and Peter Myrten. He has four grandchildren and eight (almost nine) great grandchildren. He left a family who adore and honor him as a great man. He loved his family dearly, and they knew it. Lucky for us! His life was spared.

He also loved God and his Country We are all very proud of his noble wonderful exemplary life which ended on August 20, 2011. He was buried in Lehi City Cemetery with full military rites.

**Lucky for all- His Life was spared.**